

CHASING THE CENTIPEDE.

A PECULIAR INDUSTRY WHICH
FLOURISHES IN CALIFORNIA.Quite Profitable Business—Youthful
Hunters Who Make a Good Thing
Out of Catching Poisonous Insects
For the Curiosity Dealers.

Among the many remarkable developments of life on the Pacific coast, says the Los Angeles Times, the centipede industry of Southern California is uniquely prominent, thousands of these many-legged myriapods being placed on the market each year, and even then the demand exceeds the supply. Besides wholesaling immense numbers to Eastern firms, the California novelty establishments find active customers in the tourists who purchase formidable collections of semi-tropical bugs and insects, centipedes being especially popular.

During the months of March, April, and May this strange industry is carried on with a vim, the collectors drying and storing their crops to sell the worms to the dealers for five cents each. As an active boy can easily catch 100 centipedes a day, the pay is quite considerable.

The young hunter usually carries his lunch, sometimes in a basket, sometimes in his pocket, but if he were constructed like the Indian children of South America he would not be burdened with lunch, but would satiate his appetite with centipedes, eating as he pleased and when he pleased, just as he would nibble wild berries if he were on a berrying expedition. The native South American youngsters are said to chase the centipedes from their lairs, and, after tearing off the head, with the two attendant poison fangs, eat the delicacy with gusto. But this is a gustatory feat the American youth has yet to acquire.

Besides the lunch, the hunter's paraphernalia consists of a pair of home-made pincers about eighteen inches in length, and a five-gallon oil-can, with the top thrown half open. Scraps of paper line the bottom of the can to a depth of six or eight inches, and in this rustling heap the worms are placed. If it were not for the paper that pads the jar, and affords snug hiding places, there would be a terrific battle, in which the whole collection of centipedes would unite, for they hate their own kind. Not being satisfied to kill their brother-captives, they eat one another, so that at the termination of the fight only the larger and stronger one remains.

Full-grown California centipedes, the Scolopendra castaneiceps, are from five to eight inches long, and average forty-two legs and twenty-one segments. Each leg is terminated by a formidable brown thorn, and if the worm is angered he simultaneously thrusts every thorn into the flesh of his victim, who feels as if a red hot iron were carving lines of pain upon his skin. But the weapons that do the most mischief are placed just below the mouth and are formed from a second pair of feet, which are modified into a pair of strong claws, set horizontally, in a manner resembling the fangs of ordinary spiders and terminated by a sharp, strong hook in each side. These hooks are perforated, and are traversed by a little canal leading from the poison gland. These claws come together under the flesh, with a hold so tenacious that the centipede sometimes has to be torn to pieces before it will loosen its hold.

Boys who gather the creatures are sometimes bitten, for on hot days the worms run like a streak of lightning, and unless the pincers hold firm they glide up the sticks and under the tormenters' shirt sleeves, where they wreak vengeance and make trouble generally. An application of ammonia or cooking soda is usually efficacious in removing the poison. Though the pain of being bitten by a California centipede is intense, the patient usually recovers.

During the year fully 10,000 deadly insects are, it is said, collected and prepared for the market in Pasadena. Centipedes, scorpions, tarantulas, tarantula hawks and trap-door spiders are all victimized by the small boy's pincers and man's ingenuity, and are arranged in artistic poses for the edification of curiosity seekers. Horned toads do not escape, and are marketed in immense numbers. Even rattlesnakes fall into the meshes of this remarkable industry, their skins being made into belts, purses and many other things.

Taking Advantage of the Situation.

A member of the military band at a certain barracks came to the surgeon recently with a long face and a plaintive story about a sore throat.

"Sore throat, eh?" said the surgeon, pleasantly. "Let me see. Oh, that's not bad—a slight irritation, nothing more, you will be all right in a day or two. I think you had better talk no risk by using your throat though, so I will recommend you for a fortnight's sick leave."

Armed with the surgeon's certificate, the bandsman obtained two weeks' sick leave. The two weeks had just come to an end when he met the surgeon on the parade ground. The bandsman saluted and the surgeon, recognizing the face, stopped.

"How's the throat?" he asked pleasantly.

"It's quite well, sir," was the reply.

"That's good," said the surgeon. "You can get back to your duty without fear. By the way, what instrument do you play in the band?"

"The small drum, sir!" said the musician.

KING EDWARD'S TELEGRAMS.

His Cipher Talks Over the Wires With
His Ministers and His Friends.

The task of writing a royal message is one that involves considerable labor and expense, and the popular fallacy to the effect that all the King's telegrams are transmitted free of charge may at once be exploded by the statement that royal telegrams are responsible for a bill of £1,500 per annum, while a secretary is specially employed to attend to this branch of the correspondence department.

A number of codes are in use between the sovereign and his ministers at home, while all the ambassadors abroad have a separate code which can only be translated by the King and himself. When telegraphing to intimate friends and relations King Edward always uses the word code which he has employed for years past. Queen Alexandra also having private codes of her own. All the King's official messages are signed "Edward R. L." and his private wires "Albert Edward" or "Bertie," while the Queen signs herself "Alexandria" to her friends and subjects alike.

The King's telegrams are never kept waiting, and direct wires are connected between the royal residences and all parts of the empire. As soon as the telegram has been prepared a "pilot message" is sent forward to clear the way, no one being allowed to use the wires in the mean time. The receiving clerk then makes a careful copy of the message and transmits it back again for verification, so as to avoid mistakes, after which the wires are again open to the public. Only confidential clerks are allowed to receive an important message, for there are plenty of individuals willing to pay heavily for a copy, trusting to their own ingenuity as to whether they will be able to decipher it.

But despite these precautions messages sometimes leak out, and a few years ago a journalist managed to secure the blotting pad on which the paper had reposed while the clerk wrote out the cipher with a hard pencil. An impression remained on the blotting pad which when translated, was the means of an important secret being prematurely divulged to the world. Naturally the King is often requested to telegraph his views on a certain subject to a newspaper, but only on one occasion has he done so. This occurred in 1895 during the Venezuelan crisis, when as Prince of Wales he sent a long telegram from Sandringham to Mr. Pultze, of the New York World, beseeching the American people for a peaceful termination to the difficulty.—London Tid-Bits.

A WINGED CRIMINAL.

One of the Possibilities of the Future
Aerial Navigation.

"In looking over a New York paper recently I noticed that Edison said humanity ought to be ashamed of itself for not having solved the problem of aerial navigation," said an observant citizen; "and I guess Edison must be right about it. It would seem that an age of such marvelous achievements along other lines ought to have solved this interesting and important problem. Can't we do as much as the birds? But I was thinking of the many possibilities which are wrapped up in this problem, and when we come to think of it the sudden solution of the problem, while it would be of great benefit to humanity, would bring into existence a fair quota of embarrassments. It would change the whole aspect of the situation in many respects. There would no doubt be balloon elopements, and hot pursuits through the air and occasionally the fellows who was making away with some other fellow's girl would find himself dropping toward the earth at a rather rapid rate. Or, if he should happen to be on wings, according to some of the contrivances which have been devised, he might lose a few feathers and fall just the same.

"But really, there is a more serious way of looking at the possibilities of the flying machine. Take the criminal classes, for instance. What would hinder the safe blower, the burglar and the murderer from sailing out into the air after the commission of a desperate offense? If they used balloons they could simply cut the lines and be gone in a jiffy. If they used any other appliance the result would be the same. They would simply float out into the open air. Policemen would have to wear balloons, else they would have to be provided with wings, a rather incongruous thing, when we come to think of it. Yet a policeman with wings may be one of the things of the future. If inventive genius ever succeeds in solving the problem of aerial navigation. There will be no other way for the minions of the law to pursue the men who commit all kinds of acts against the written law. Many embarrassments might come up, when we come to think of it. In connection with the problem of aerial navigation."—New Orleans Times Democrat.

Oil on the Water.

A test of a cannon that throws a shell designed to scatter oil on boisterous waves was recently made. The shell is of wood and conical in shape. It contains two gallons of oil. At one end of the projectile is a vein. This is covered with paper, which is blown off as the shell leaves the piece, allowing the oil to escape.

When a boy is told that he is a chip of the old block it generally makes him feel chipper.

The lazy man wastes a lot of time looking at the clock.

What the Microscope Has Done.

BY PROF. JOHN TROWBRIDGE.

REMEMBER that in the year 1860 a man who occupied himself with an interest in the large affairs of humanity,—in the important questions of the microscope was smiled at as a bleary-eyed, narrow specialist, who had little time, such as the anti-slavery cause, the question of the Turk, the problems of free trade and the tariff. It was supposed that the microscope was a perfected instrument, and that little more could be done with it than in studying lower forms of life, which were interesting to the naturalist, but had little to do with humanity. At that time the death rate from diphtheria was over sixty per cent., and more than five per cent. of women died in childbirth. Today, owing to improvements in the microscope, the death rate in diphtheria has been reduced to less than ten per cent., and the mortality in lying-in cases to one twentieth of one per cent.

Zeiss has perfected microscopic lenses which have made possible the study of bacilli, and have led to some important results in the treatment of disease. Modern aseptic surgery is the result also of investigations with this new instrument of research.

Thus the improvements in the microscope have led to the germ theory of disease, the discovery of antitoxin, and to that greatest boon to mankind of the century just closed, the realization of the importance of aseptic surgery. In aseptic surgery the endeavor of the surgeon is to exclude the small germs which vitiate the blood, and the result of the study of electric discharges is now leading to methods of communicating electrons to the tissues or to methods of setting them free. Violet light can set free electrons from metals. X rays can do the same. Moreover, the latter can burn the tissues, setting up some yet obscure form of electrolytic action. It is claimed strenuously by good authorities that there is a healing action in malignant skin diseases, due to this new electrical radiation.

Right of Dumb Animals to Life
and Immunity From Torture

BY CHESTER A. SNOW.

President of the Washington Humane Society.

NOT very long ago no rights were recognized save the rights of kings, called "divine." Slowly emerged Magna Charta, Habeas Corpus, and the Declaration of Independence, followed in our day by the liberation of the slave and the serf.

Now, some men and many women have taken up the cause of animals, many of whom live harried lives because of the abuse of men. These animals are no longer quite without voice or vote. They have representatives in the Congress of the United States; a sympathetic and powerful press is advocating their right to life, to the pursuit of happiness and a degree of liberty, and societies equipped with offices and police agents are throughout the United States arresting and by process of law punishing their oppressors.

This reform, however, is only well begun. Thoughtless, fashion-added fiends are still cutting off the caudal end of the backbone of horses, causing them diabolical pain and making them impotent for life against tormenting flies. They are shearing horses in the coldest winter weather, robbing them of the warm coat which nature provides, while dressed in overcoats and costly furs, they blandly insist that nakedness is good for the horse. By an overdraw check-rein they are forcing him to hold his head and neck in an unnatural and strained position.

A witty Frenchman once said that his intimate acquaintance with men had caused him to have a great respect for dogs. Knowing the responsibility of those whom we represent, we invite to membership all who realize that kindness to animals can be best promoted by systematic, organized effort. No one can feel otherwise than proud to advocate their cause.

In patience, temperance, simplicity of life, honesty, and directness of manner and expression, it would be detraction to compare them to men.

The "Less" Century.

BY A SAGE OLD NEW YORKER.

THIS will likely be known as the "less" century. I was over at the Brooklyn Navy Yard recently and was told that an order had been issued from the department in Washington to sell all of the carrier pigeons belonging to the government. That is on account of the wireless telegraphy that is to do the work heretofore intrusted to the pigeons.

Then, only the other day, I was reading about the girlless telephone. It appears that some sort of an automatic connection attachment has been invented that will dispense with the hello girl.

All through the city we see the horseless vehicles that are more and more invading the domain that we thought was secure to the horse.

Last spring, over in Egypt, I made an excursion on a trolley car that I made a few years ago on a camel, and the lines are being extended over lands that used to be marked on our maps as deserts. It really looks as though we were to have camelless deserts very soon. We already have a partially donkeyless Holy Land because of trolley cars.

Soon we will have a steamless, smokeless, cinderless elevated railway, and our underground railway will come to us gasless. Smokeless powder is nothing new.

It is difficult to tell where this "less" business will stop, for now I read that a certain Dr. Loeb, of Chicago, has been experimenting with a colloid solution, or something of that sort, and says it destroys the death principle in living organisms. If he is right we may have a deathless life before we reach the end of the century.

Science an Art in Homemaking.

BY ADA C. SWEET.

THE American globe-trotter is of the feminine gender. The nations of the earth look in wonder at the bands of wandering North Americans who infect Europe. The French ask, "Where are the men?"

They are—O inquiring foreigner—not at home, but they are at work in their own country, most of them, and when the long day in shop, bank or office is over they flock to the clubs and hotels and theatres, seeking recreation and change, these toiling husbands and fathers of restless sight-seers.

"The curse of the wandering foot" has been sung by the Hoosier poet. He has treated the theme from its masculine side, showing the tragic shades of the life of an adventurer, the soldier of fortune and the tramp. I fear that darker shadows still lurk behind the feminine unrest which thinks lightly of home and family, hesitates not over separations from loved ones for years, counts not the risks of breaking up the restful refuge over the loss of which the most careless stops at times to sigh. Home.

Simplicity of life might do much to restore the home to its old place—first in the hearts of American women of all grades of fortune. Simplicity and system are needed to lighten the burdens of both mistress and servant.

Is it not worth study, this science and art in one of home-making? It is a study which every woman can carry on without professors, books or fellow-classmates. A deep look first into her own heart, then loving, sympathetic, earnest reading of the characters of every member of her family—this is the first lesson.

Next to adapt the knowledge thus gained to the end of making each one of her household happy and comfortable every moment while under the home roof, herself included, is the problem.

Is it not well worth to any one what effort sever must be made?

A BEGINNING OF MILLIONS.

The Chance Through Which One Man
Has Become Rich.

One Western millionaire came into the possession of his wealth through his own abilities, beyond a doubt, but it is also true that his opportunities were excellent. And they came to him in an unusual way.

It happened that the wife of a very rich man had for many years gone to a certain shop in New York for her gowns and had always been waited upon by the same woman. One morning she went to the store to order a gown. After the business of getting the new dress had been transacted, the saleswoman said to her:

"This will be the last time that I shall have the pleasure of waiting on you, Mrs. X., for I am going to be married."

When the customer expressed an interest in her plans the woman told her that she and the man to whom she had been engaged for several years had decided that they might as well get married as wait, especially as she had managed by prudence to save a little money. Said the customer:

"You bring your betrothed to my house tonight to see me. I would like to meet him and have my husband know him too."

A time was set and that night the saleswoman and her betrothed visited the wealthy patron. The latter introduced them to her husband, who talked with the man and was favorably impressed with him. He learned that the man was able to make only a small income at his business.

Before the man left the house, a date for a subsequent visit had been set. The man, of course, came back and the result was a place for him in one of the millionaire's mills near a Western city.

That was his beginning. Today he counts his millions on more fingers than his two hands possess. And his fortune came through his meeting with the millionaire and his good luck in making a favorable impression on him as well as on his ability to take advantage of the opportunities that came to him.—New York Sun.

Tommy Visits Jack Frost.

"Now, Tommy, you must watch for Jack Frost tonight, for it is very cold, and he will very probably be around."

That is what Tommy's mother said when she tucked Tommy in his snug little bed. Tommy was very sure he could keep awake, but the "sneaky" man got the better of him, so when Tommy awoke next morning his window was covered with pretty pictures and Tommy did not know how it was done. But the next night after Tommy had gone to bed his door opened and a very funny little man entered. He went straight to the window and worked on his picture.

Tommy was very much frightened at first, but his fright soon wore off and he ventured to speak to the little man.

"Don't you think it a shame that I must come to bed so early?" said Tommy.

"It is good for little folks to be in bed early," replied Jack Frost, "but if you are sure you are not too tired I will take you home with me and bring you back in the morning."

Of course Tommy consented, and was soon dressed. He seated himself in Jack's ice sleigh with its snowy blankets with a shiver, but to his great surprise it was warm and comfortable.

Jack Frost painted many other beautiful pictures and then they started for real fairy land. The sleigh was drawn by snow flakes that flew very fast, and they soon reached Jack Frost's palace. It was made of clear, beautiful, transparent ice. Lights were shining from within and without and Tommy could see the beautiful frost fairies dancing and having a splendid time. That was all Tommy could remember, for just then some one said: "Oh, Tommy, you will be late to kindergarten if you don't hurry."

But Tommy believes that it really happened, and to this day he says it did. But Tommy was very small when he had that happy dream.

He often wishes he could visit Jack again, but Jack has not called for him yet. Do you think he ever will?—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Horse Story.

In his article on "Tips and Commissions," in Lippincott, John Gilmer Speed says:

"Our skirts are not entirely clean on this side of the Atlantic, though, to be sure, it is not yet by any means common for gentlemen or ladies to take commissions from their tradesmen on account of services rendered. As to whether it will be or not, I am not so sure. That servants expect and exact commissions is absolutely certain, however. A while ago I sold a horse to a friend. He took a fancy to the horse and finally bought him for four hundred dollars. The next day he came to me with a check for four hundred and twenty-five dollars. 'When you send that horse around,' he said 'please give that extra twenty-five dollars to my coachman. I don't want him to lame that horse or injure him in any way.'

"'Gracious!' I asked 'you seem to be in mortal fear of your coachman?'

"'Yes, I suppose I am. They are all alike, however. Commissions or purchased are the perquisites of the stablemen, and they have no use for a horse about which they have not been consulted and on which they have no had a commission. I have had some nasty experiences, and as this horse is for my own riding, I don't want any prejudices in the stable against him.'



Why Not?

If Bet beds herself with gems, bestirs herself when bid, And feels benumbed when very old—be wails her lot when chid, Why shouldn't she bedress herself with garments, and befeud herself with food, and feel beglad a new book to be read?—Life.

Digging For It.

"When a man is working hard why do they say he is digging away?" "Because, my boy, he is after the root of all evil, and how else can he reach it?"—Chicago Post.

Severe Measures.



"Can't you stop your little brother from crying?" "No. I've been er punchin' him fer ter last five minutes, and he won't stop."—New York Journal.

Extremes Meet.

"Were you positive enough when you told the old man you intended to marry his daughter?" "Yes, but he was negative."—Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune.

An Epigram.

"Is there any difference between 'economical' and 'stingy'?" "Oh, yes. People call an economical man stingy, and a stingy man calls himself economical."—New York World.

A Practical Conclusion.

"Did your investigation of volcanic phenomenon lead to any practical conclusion?"

"It did," answered the popular scientist.

"What was it?"

"A check from a magazine."—Washington Star.

A Doubtful Compliment.

Mistress—"Now, Jane, there is no use of further argument as to how this dish should be prepared, but our ideas on the subject are so different that it is evident one or the other of us is crazy." Jane—"True for you, ma'am, an' it's not the likes of me as would be after sayin' the likes of you would have no more sense than to keep a crazy cook."—Chicago News.

The Six O'Clock Dinner.

The 6 o'clock dinner is not a mere fad; anyway, not extremely mere.

The 6 o'clock dinner obliterates the appetite for breakfast. But for the 6 o'clock dinner there would probably be but a meagre demand for breakfast foods, and that which is now a great industry, employing many hands and advertising liberally, would hardly exist.

The 6 o'clock dinner kills a man sooner or later; usually not until after he has amassed a fortune, yet before he has had time to queer his wife and daughters socially with his chin whiskers and bad grammar.

The 6 o'clock dinner keeps one awake nights, thus nearly doubling the number of his business hours.—Puck.

Shocked Him Into It.

Kitty—"So you managed to get Fred to propose at last? How did you bring it about?"

Bertha—"I borrowed Mamie's engagement ring and had it on the third finger of my left hand when Fred called last evening."

Kitty—"And what did he say?"

Bertha—"He saw it the moment he got into the room. He looked as though he'd go through the floor. Finally he mustered up courage to ask if it was an engagement ring, and I said 'Yes.' That was no lie, you know. It was an engagement ring—Mamie's, you know."

Kitty—"And then?"

Bertha—"Then he gasped and I thought he would faint. But the upshot of it was he proposed."—Boston Transcript.

Unpleasant.



(Aunt Harriet has lived in fear and trembling since Willie had a white rat given him as a birthday present. He has just lost it.)

Willie—"Don't move, aunt, the beggar's under here somewhere."—Moon-hine.